

REMARKS

Claims 3-7 and 15-17 are pending. The claims have been amended to more explicitly recite features which clearly distinguish over the art of record. These are features which in the last Office Action, were indicated to be "not in the claims". They are now in all of the claims. The key feature added herein to independent claims 15 and 16 is the feature wherein only a minimum amount to be spent is specified by the potential customer, not the specific products proposed to be purchased. This feature has the following advantages over the art of record:

1. Improved Speed - Not requiring the user to make product selections makes the process much faster and much more efficient for the user and merchant. It gets the promotional offer in the hands of the user as fast as possible.
2. Improved Flexibility - Not requiring product selections makes the discount offer more flexible for the user as the user can now buy anything the retailer offers as long as they spend the amount entered. The user is not limited to the product selections made before entering the store. They can change their mind and decide to buy other product(s) after they are in the store and still realize benefit from the discount.
3. Improved Marketing Results/Cost Savings - The speed and efficiency gained through the elimination of product selections improves response rates and decreases costs. The less time consuming it is for the consumer to receive a promotional offer, the more likely they are to actually make a purchase. The more likely the users are to buy, the less costly the campaign becomes for the retailer.

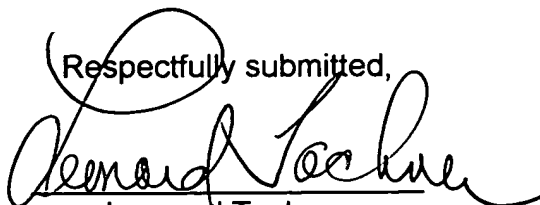
4. Wider Range of Industry Uses - Transmitting customer value without requiring product selections for promotional marketing benefits a wider array of retailers whose customers do not generally use "shopping lists" prior to making purchases in their stores. Many retail sectors do not lend themselves well to systems that require users to make specific product selections prior to entering a store. Clothing retailers, electronics retailers, shoe stores, gift shops, retail service providers, et cetera, do not service shoppers who know the exact make and model of the products they will buy before they enter the store to touch, feel, hear, and compare the various products/services the retailer offers.

The feature added by claim 17 provides a powerful incentive for a shopper to spend more and save more regardless of the amount he or she originally proposed. This feature is shown in the coupon of FIG. 6 as originally filed. The feature of "non-specific product minimum spending amount" is disclosed in the specification at page 4, lines 1-9.

It is earnestly believed that the amendments made herein overcome the various rejections of the previous Office Action by clearly delineating advantageous and unobvious distinctions over the prior art. Reconsideration and allowance of pending claims 3-7 and 15-17 is therefore respectfully solicited. In view of the long and convoluted prosecution herein, if the Examiner feels that a telephone conversation would be beneficial, Applicant's attorney would be grateful to receive such a communication.

AMENDMENT Continued
Serial No. 09/482,830

Respectfully submitted,



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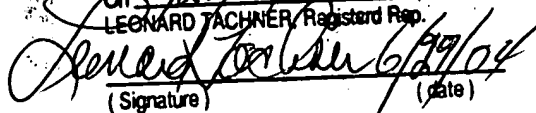
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